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Adopt-a-Road Summary

Howard County Recreation & Parks has just completed its first Adopt-a-Road program of the new year. We had a record number of employees participate, 33! Total trash collected was 67 lbs. with 31 lbs. of that total being recycled. Special thanks to the Parks Bureau for sponsoring this clean-up! Our next Adopt-a-Road Clean-up will be June 1st, 10:30 AM. Since we began the program, Department employees have collected 358 lbs. of trash and an additional 149 lbs. of recycling.



June 1st 10:30AM	Bureau of Recreation
Sept. 7th 10:30AM	Bureau TBD
Dec. 7th 10:30AM	Bureau TBD



Milkweed for Monarchs and More!

Recent reports from the areas in Mexico where the Monarch butterfly overwinters have been very positive. After a number of years of steep population declines, this year's winter population of monarch butterflies has been estimated to be [a 255% increase](#) over last winter. With planting season upon us, you can do your part to encourage this positive trend in the monarch population by planting milkweed—the monarch host plant. Or consider helping many butterflies and native pollinators with a native pollinator garden. There are a number of local resources to help with native planting efforts: Native plant sales are happening both at [GreenFest](#) and at Robinson Nature Center's [Native Plant Palooza](#). Additionally, Robinson Nature Center is offering a 2 hour workshop, "[Plan Your Native Plant Garden](#)," on Sunday, May 1st.






*Buy Local,
Eat Local,
Be Local!*

Save the Date!

**Saturday
April 16, 2016
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Howard Community
College**

www.HCGreenFest.org

Important Dates

2016 is the International [Year of Pulses](#)
March 19, 8:30-9:30 PM—[Earth Hour](#)
March 21—[World Forestry Day](#)
March 22—[World Water Day](#)
April 22—[Earth Day](#)
April 29—[Arbor Day](#)
May 22—[International Biodiversity Day](#)

Bike Day!

May is National Bike Month, with National Bike to Work Day falling on **May 20th** in 2016. For info on Bike day events visit <http://www.bikeleague.org>



Sustain-a-Selfie

Are you green? Do you reduce, reuse, and recycle? The Sustainability Committee is requesting all Department of Recreation & Parks staff to show us your sustainability efforts. During the month of April we will be collecting your “Sustain-a-Selfies” and posting the best ones to the Department’s Flickr account. Let’s show the world all our efforts to protect our planet. Photos must include DRP staff members and can include selfies from the office, the field, or from home. Send your Sustain-a-Selfies to Marisa Olszewski, MOlszewski@howardcountymd.gov.



Is My Bottled Water Just Tap Water?

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has answered some frequently asked questions about bottled water including, isn’t bottled water safer than tap water?, how can I determine if bottled water is really just tap water?, and how does drinking bottled water affect the environment? The NRDC tested different brands of bottled water and found that 22% of the brands tested contained chemical contaminants. If consumed over a long period of time they could lead to cancer or other health problems. If you are interested in finding out the water source of your bottled water, it is recommended to write or call the bottler. Choose to buy brands that use known protected sources, the quality of water is higher and these brands tend to make testing and treatment information readily available. <http://www.nrdc.org/water/drinking/qbw.asp>

Our Farmers’ Market – right here at headquarters – produces food starting in June/July

Thanks to the Health and Wellness Committee, there will soon be a delicious bounty of work-grown nutritious treats available for all. Our dedicated farmers will plant a variety of tomatoes, sweet peppers, green peppers, hot peppers, zucchini, squash and herbs. Please keep your eyes “peeled” for the upcoming Farmers’ Market where vegetables and fruits will be in the lobby until the end of the season, for staff to take home with them. Donations will be gladly accepted and will be used to fund future projects and initiatives. Special thanks to the Garden Crew and the Health & Wellness Committee for making this happen. We’ll also welcome any homegrown veggies you have for the market.





Clean Energy from the Water in your Tap!

Portland, OR – A private startup has developed an inline turbine that turns water pressure from gravity into electricity. Hydroelectricity is nothing new, but Lucid Energy has developed a way to avoid all the usual pitfalls of traditional hydropower systems by harnessing the flow of water through municipal water lines. After a pilot project in California, a full-scale project installed in Portland in late 2014 uses four turbines in fifty feet of pipe to produce an average of 1,100 megawatt-hours a year – enough to power about 150 homes.



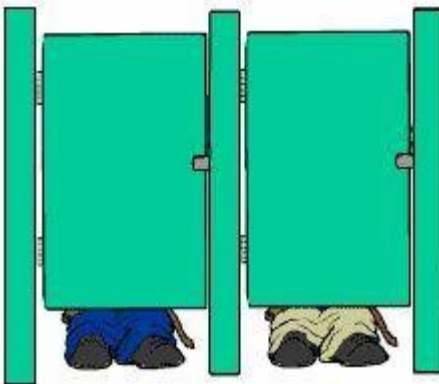
Installed in a 42" diameter pipe flowing downhill, the four turbines churn out energy from just gravity and water; no dams, habitat reductions, negative effects on wildlife or any of the other issues associated with typical renewable energy projects. In Portland, the initial cost was picked up by a private group of investors with no financial risk to the city. The project is expected to produce \$2 million worth of electricity over 20 years.



"It's not going to be generating as much power as a large scale solar farm," Laura Wisland, a senior energy analyst for the Union of Concerned Scientists said, "but it's part of a growing trend of taking advantage of existing infrastructure. We have water pipes all over the country, so I think it just makes sense."

Sources:

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/drinking-water-pipes-can-also-deliver-electric-power/>
<http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2015/08/13/3661575/portland-water-pipes-energy/>



Learn Some Eco-friendly Facts While Sitting Down

Coming to a toilet stall near you – we will start putting eco-friendly tips and facts in bathrooms in HCRP facilities. The idea came from The Scoop on Poop info-flyers placed in zoo bathroom stalls around the country. Have an eco-fact you'd like to share? Send them (with a credible reference) to Anna Hunter, ahunter@howardcountymd.gov. (We will not have Turd Trivia like the San Francisco Zoo – but we hope to encourage sustainable living practices.) One of San Fran's: "Good to the last dropping. A

company in Indonesia makes gourmet coffee by collecting beans from the droppings of the palm civet. The coffee is said to have a rich, "musty" taste and sells for \$175 per pound"

(<http://www.sfbay.org/announcements/the-scoop-on-poop-opening-day>).

Which is GREENER: Shopping in-store or buying online?

While you may not often think about the carbon footprint of the shopping experience, these days there's no reason to forego greener thinking in all purchasing decisions. While there are a few studies on this topic, and Amazon itself claims that online shopping is a greener alternative to going to the store, the answer is actually dependent on a number of individual factors, and like most things, a little planning goes a long way!



Many studies focus on the "last mile" of a purchase; the final journey a product takes from either the warehouse or a brick and mortar location to your door. In a single-item comparison, often the store visit edges out the online purchase, but the reality is far more complex. The number of items purchased on each trip, number of return visits, method of transportation, shipping speed picked and distance to the store confuse the issue. Often, a store visit combines multiple purchases and even different errands, and doing that trip by walking, biking or using public transportation reduces the energy use of the trip significantly. On the other hand, delivery companies make one run with lots of product deliveries and are very efficient at planning routes to save fuel - combine this with the energy savings of a warehouse over a traditional storefront and you may see the environmental benefits many online retailers proclaim.

When looking at the overall picture of modern retailing, there are other factors that come into play long before that final journey. Major online retailers rely on energy-hungry server farms to maintain their inventory and services, and any of the faster shipping options beyond ground transportation quickly negate the previous benefits. Storefronts must have their products delivered from a warehouse somewhere, adding a "trip" to your store visit, and making multiple trips to check out the product or return it racks up the carbon footprint. Packaging is also a contributor - more expensive and sensitive items such as laptops and tablets require a lot more packaging than a low cost, low protection item like a t-shirt or scarf.

In the end, the decisions of the consumer make the final determination on which purchasing method is more sustainable. If you wish to shop the traditional way, consider purchasing from one store or shopping center, combining the trip with a friend or even walking or using public transportation. When purchasing online, place your order early enough to avoid expedited shipping, make sure the delivery driver has a place to leave your package versus having to come back, and avoid purchasing items if there is strong chance you will need to return it. Ultimately, all the usual green things you can already do apply to your purchasing as well: think and plan ahead, combine trips and purchases and think of your overall impact in every aspect of the transaction.

Source: business.edf.org/blog/2013/12/21/is-online-shopping-better-for-the-environment/#sthash.Rta0s3TE.dpuf